



**TO THEIR BOX**—German Ambassador Grewe and his new wife were part of the VIP audience that attended the opening of the National Symphony Orchestra's season last evening. Star of the evening was Russian pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy.



**ATTEND OPENING** — Miss Katie Cabell, daughter of CIA Deputy Director, and Mrs. Charles P. Cabell, and Mr. Preston Pitts were others attending the opening. Mr. Pitts is a nephew of Senator and Mrs. McClellan. Star Staff Photos by Rosemary.

## Artist's American Debut Is Envoy's First Hearing

By RUTH DEAN  
Star Staff Writer

The American debut of young Soviet pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy with the National Symphony Orchestra last night also marked the first time he was heard by his country's ambassador to the United States, Mikhail Menshikov.

When the Soviet envoy arrived at Constitution Hall for the symphony's opening season concert, reporters asked him the inevitable question: "Do you think he plays better than Van Cliburn (the Texas pianist who walked off with the Tschai-kovsky piano competition first prize in Moscow last April)?"

"I don't know; I haven't heard him. After all I've been away from my country for the last few years," he explained, "when he was still a boy."

But when asked for a comparison after the concert, he countered diplomatically, "I think they're both excellent, each in his own way. Ashkenazy is more lyrical; Cliburn plays with more strength and gusto."

### Mme. Menshikov Away

The ambassador was unaccompanied by Mme. Menshikov who is still in Moscow, but had as his guests Polish Ambassador and Mme. Spas-

owski and the ambassadors of two other Iron Curtain countries, Romania and Czechoslovakia.

Two other boxes also held other officials and their wives from the Soviet Embassy who turned out to give moral support to their countryman. However, the prolonged applause and cheers that brought the 21-year-old pianist back for three stage bows seemed to indicate he had the enthusiastic support of every one in the audience.

As always, opening night presented a spectacle of color with many of the ladies wearing bright jeweled-toned sashes and taffetas, and their escorts in black tie.

Applause greeted the orchestra conductor, Dr. Howard Mitchell, when he appeared and opened the concert with playing of the National Anthem.

Among boxholders arriving for the concert were Mrs. Arthur Summerfield, without the Postmaster General who was in Chicago for a speaking engagement. She had as her guests Mrs. Edson O. Sessions, wife of the Deputy Postmaster General; Mrs. John M. McKibbin, wife of the Assistant Postmaster General, and Mrs. Glenn Emmons, wife of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Later arrivals were Mr. and

Mrs. Eugene H. Rietzke with the Austrian Ambassador and Mrs. Platzer, whom they had honored at a pre-concert dinner at the Mayflower Hotel. In their party also were Mrs. Irene Caldwell, Col. Rudolph Temple, and the Platzer's pretty debutante daughter, Sylvia, who occupied an adjoining box with Miss Catharine Cabell, daughter of CIA Deputy Director, and Mrs. Charles P. Cabell, and her brother, Ben.

German Ambassador and Mrs. Grewe and Australian Ambassador and Mrs. Beale were also among the Tuesday night concert series boxholders present. Later the Grewes were among those including Ambassador Menshikov going on to an after-concert supper at the Arts Club given by the orchestra's Board of Directors in honor of Tuesday and Wednesday night series boxholders.

### Lion of Evening

Mrs. Jouett Shouse, who will attend tonight's concert, was among those dropping by for the midnight supper, as were former Ambassador and Mrs. Myron Cowen who had just come from the Nathan Twinings' dinner for Italy's visiting Defense Chief of Staff. Gen. Giuseppe Manicelli. An added treat, Mrs. Cowen said was a piano concert by Gen. and Mrs. Twinings' talented son, Nathan.

Mr. Ashkenazy was the lion of the evening. Although the small reserved pianist

could speak no English, he graciously shook the many hands proffered him and answered question as best he could through an interpreter. "That boy certainly has magic in his fingers," commented Mrs. Les Biffle, who had attended the concert with Mr. Biffle.

Former Chief of Protocol and Mrs. John F. Simmons had also been to the concert, and Mr. Simmons recalled that the Chopin concerto selected by the young pianist for his debut last night was the same favorite played so often by another famed pianist of a generation ago, Josef Hofmann. In fact, several of the guests last night commented on the similarity between Ashkenazy and Hofmann, not only in small stature but delicate playing style.

Dr. and Mrs. Mitchell and their handsome son, Glenn, were at the supper party. Others included the assistant conductor and Mrs. Lloyd Giesler, Mrs. Mary Howe with Mrs. Robert H. Dunlap, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Shipley, Mr. Gerson Nordlinger, Mr. and Mrs. Hans Klagsbrunn, Mr. and Mrs. H. Gabriel Murphy, Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Ching, Miss Louise Gore, Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Orem, Mr. and Mrs. John Lillard, Mme. Tamara Dmitrieff, Mr. and Mrs. T. Perry Lippitt, Dean and Mrs. Francis B. Sayre, the Rev. and Mrs. C. Leslie Glenn, Mrs. Richard Drum Huht and many more.